

Our Class of 2025

Rural Leaders Training Program

Since 1973, ARI has invited rural community leaders from grassroots organizations in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Pacific to our campus in Japan. In our 9-month program, ARI provides practical learning to build a just, peaceful, and sustainable society, respecting differences such as ethnicity, culture, religion and gender.

This year, our 53rd year of training, we welcome 27 participants to the Rural Leaders Training Program and 2 graduates to the Advanced Training Program, representing 17 countries.

* (ARI name)

Uganda



Jida Nankwanga

Organization of African Instituted Churches (OAIC)

Senior Farmer Advisor

(Jida) As someone deeply committed to faith, social justice, and sustainable agriculture, I work to empower smallholder farmers and improve food security through organic farming, soil health, and climate resilience. At ARI, I aim to enhance my leadership and advocacy skills to create lasting change in my community, promoting sustainable livelihoods and a fairer food system.

Eswatini



Sambulo Sizo Mkhabela

Organization of African Instituted Churches (OAIC)

Teacher / Intern

(Sambulo) I am a community-driven individual who values faith, relationships, and environmental sustainability. Passionate about nature, gardening, and teamwork, I strive for peace and personal growth. At ARI, I aim to enhance my leadership and public speaking skills to better serve my community and create a lasting, positive impact.

Cameroon



Yong Prosper Ngoh

Vision in Action Cameroon

Farm Manager

(Yong) I desire to elevate my knowledge and skills in sustainable agriculture, to improve the efforts of my organization in strengthening food security, income sustainability, and community empowerment. I look forward to learning community development strategies, which will be helpful in boosting social cohesion and resilience in my community.

Indonesia



Andi Wisno

Huria Kristen Batak Protestant (HKBP)

Candidate Pastor, Pig Farmer

(Andi) I am deeply committed to empowering farmers through sustainable livestock practices and community-driven agriculture. With a passion for education and farm sustainability, I work to build trust, introduce innovative techniques, and strengthen economic stability. My vision is a future where collaboration and knowledge transform farming into a thriving, resilient livelihood.



Beriyanti Oktavia Damanik

Simalungun Christian Protestant Church (GKPS)

Priest

(Beri) In my life, I have worked primarily as a pastor, and I have also helped lead agricultural and disaster management seminars. At ARI I want to learn servant leadership, agriculture, and community development. When I return, I will help lead the church's outreach activities to bring more peace and justice to the lives of the Simalungun people.



Sarmo Berutu

Pakpak Dairi Christian Protestant Church (GKPPD)

GKPPD Mart Coordinator

(Sarmo) I was born and raised in Aceh Singkil, where agriculture is central to life. Actively involved in my church, GKPPD, I support people with disabilities through the RBM program and manage GKPPD Mart. At ARI, I aim to deepen my leadership and agricultural skills so that afterwards I can train people with disabilities in the field of sustainable farming.

Democratic Republic of the Congo



Lukogo Kahyumba Faraja Josaphat

CEPAC FUNU NURU

Volunteer

(Lukogo) I work with adults and youth who are deeply impacted by limited resources and armed conflict. I want to add to my university training in Nutrition by learning more about sustainable agriculture, leadership, and conflict resolution. When I return from ARI, I will fight malnutrition by leading agricultural training projects.

Cambodia



Savoeurn Sav

Bless Cambodia Network

Field Worker

(Savoeurn) I support rural families through farming and education by providing agricultural training, teaching English, and leading community projects. My work includes a school and a livestock program, helping families learn how to build a better future. After training at ARI, I hope to develop Bless Cambodia Network's organic farming and lead others in my community to implement sustainable practices.

Ghana



Francis Kwami Ahiadzo

Centre for Sustainable Communities

Environmental Steward, Farm Assistant

(Frank) I engage with my community by addressing land conflicts and promoting unity amongst ethnic groups. I achieve this through shared decision-making and active listening. At ARI, I hope to strengthen my skills in sustainable agriculture and leadership in order to launch an impactful food security project in Peki that will build a culture of collaboration, continuous learning, and self-sufficiency.

India



Anthony Carvalho

Archdiocese of Goa and Daman

Priest

(Anthony) I am committed to supporting rural communities through agricultural, social, and religious development. With years of experience in community farming, I work to revive interest in agriculture and help marginalized groups access resources. After ARI, I aim to establish organic farming and dairy initiatives while promoting education and self-help groups for a sustainable future.



Kenwang Diwen

Tutsa Baptist Church Council

Gospel and Livelihood Coordinator

(Kenwang) I value the dignity of work and dignity in earning a livelihood through endeavor in life. As a graduate student from Nogna, India, I serve my community through church outreach and livelihood programs. I have led agricultural training in persimmon farming to promote self-sustainability. At ARI, I hope to strengthen my organic farming and leadership skills to ultimately uplift my community.



Malemkhombi Chanu Moirangthem

Integrated Rural Development Service Organization

Assistant Project Coordinator

(Malem) I am a dedicated social worker specializing in Family and Child Welfare, with a strong commitment to leadership and community development. I value teamwork and continuous learning to create positive change. My goal is to address social inequalities and youth issues by fostering a supportive and empowered community.

Sri Lanka



Arunpushparaj Rajakumaran

Methodist Church of Sri Lanka

Pastor

(Arun) Rebuilding a community who has been impacted by civil wars is not an easy feat. I want to learn more about organic agriculture and community leadership so that I can help my community build a sustainable farming venture, boosting their food and income security and making them self-sufficient.



Elizabeth Ngun Chin Par

Community Association for Rural Development (CARD)

Assistant Trainer

(Elizabeth) In my opinion, passion, communication, and courage are three of the most important characteristics that a good leader has. I come from a close-knit farming community in Chin State, Myanmar, where unity and cooperation are strong. I am dedicated to environmental stewardship and community well-being. At ARI, I hope to strengthen my leadership and agricultural skills to support sustainable development.



Khaw Than Win

Lisu Baptist Convention

Farmer

(Than Win) I lead my family's carrot and pig farming business with patience and a strong passion for sustainability. In the face of challenges like market instability and lack of clarity for true market prices, I advocate for price control for farmers to prevent exploitation. I believe in unity and kindness, supporting education, and lending a helping hand to all.

Liberia



Rebecca M.J. Thompson

Pentecostal Mission Unlimited (PMU)

Community Volunteer Supervisor

(Rebecca) I live in a farming community where agriculture sustains 80 percent of the population. In my community, I help address local challenges such as land conflicts. At ARI, I hope to strengthen my leadership skills to support farmers with economic initiatives to inspire self-sufficiency and create a more united future.



Robert S. Derrick

United Methodist Rural and Agricultural Development Program (UMRADP)

Marketing Officer

(Robert) As an agricultural development worker in Liberia, I am passionate about building resilient communities. I support farmers facing seasonal floods and economic challenges, helping them improve production and marketing strategies. Upon completion of the ARI training program, I expect to be a people-centered leader who will emphasize service and cultural diversity.



A. Varmah Sayndee

National Action for Economic Empowerment and Development

Program Officer

(Varmah) With over ten years of experience working in NGOs, I promote transparency, teamwork, and economic empowerment to bridge gaps between diverse ethnic and religious groups within my region. My goal is to learn about organic farming and community life because I work in farming communities with diverse groups of people, so these topics will allow me to better spread sustainable farming practices.

Kenya



Dickens Wasonga Ogut

Nomiya Fweny Maler Church

Extension Agriculture Officer

(Bob) I have over 30 years of experience in farming and livestock rearing, working to strengthen agriculture and capacity building in my community. As a dedicated community mobilizer, I help address food shortages and promote sustainable farming. My goal is to develop a model farm that empowers local farmers with organic techniques.

Zambia



Lily Singelengele

Green Agricultural Youth Organization (GAYO)

Executive Director

(Lily) My work focuses on promoting sustainable agriculture and empowering women and young people in climate-smart agriculture, agroecology, and agribusiness. I will use the techniques I learn at ARI to further this work, foster local leaders in these skills, and create peer networks to promote better livelihoods for our communities.

Vietnam



Ta Thuy Trang

Mekong Organics

Volunteer Educator

(Trang) Since graduating from university, I have been learning about and leading sustainable farming initiatives and environmental preservation. After ARI, I plan to work with small farmers to create a brand of locally grown fruits and medicinal herbs and to establish a community of sustainable farmers.

Advanced Training Program

Training Assistant (TA):

ARI invites graduates who have demonstrated outstanding leadership and accomplishment in their communities to a year of advanced studies.

Philippines



Madelyn Blanco Generoso

Atikha Overseas Worker & Community Initiative

Technical Staff

(Madie) I train migrant Filipino workers and their families in agroforestry and social entrepreneurship, guided by empathy and a deep understanding of their struggles. At ARI, I'm learning sustainable agriculture to help create a model training school. After ARI, I will continue mentoring migrant women and their families on financial planning to support stronger, more resilient communities.



Sarah Michelle Azures Violen

Jireh Children's Home, Inc.

House Parent

(Sarah) I work as a caregiver and educator for girls who have experienced abuse in my community. I want to learn how, on a small parcel of land, a family can be sustainable and produce food for their needs. After ARI, I see myself sharing my knowledge with others, coaching them to create their own sustainable, healthy and self-reliant communities.



Judith Nakanyika

Mindolo Ecumenical Foundation (MEF)

Teacher

(Jade) As a schoolteacher, I foster curiosity in children. I work to encourage organic farming and address problems with open dialogue. I aim to deepen my knowledge of soil health and environmental conservation to promote food security. After ARI, I will use my knowledge to lead innovative projects that bring lasting change to my community.



Newton Mwansa Chisanga

Mindolo Ecumenical Foundation (MEF)

Farm Staff

(Chi Chi) A good leader is passionate, empathetic, a good listener, and values his followers. I lead training programs in Zambia's Copperbelt region, managing gardens, poultry, and piggery while promoting sustainable farming. At ARI, I hope to learn climate resilience and organic techniques to strengthen MEF's ecological conservation efforts.

Japan



Mizuki Oki

(Micky) When I learned about childhood hunger in developing countries, I was deeply moved to take action against it through agriculture. Studying tropical horticulture in university and gaining hands-on experience in Australia helped me understand the power of agriculture across cultures. At ARI, I hope to grow my cross-cultural awareness and promote farming that supports people and the planet.



Naoshi Kawatsuki

(Nao) My background is in mechanical engineering, so agriculture is a new and exciting direction for me. I hope to learn how to cultivate life so that I can ultimately pass this knowledge on to more people. I'm eager to explore organic farming, reflect on humanity's connection to the soil, and find practical ways to embody "living together" in today's world.

India



Jeremiya Narzary

Priscilla Centre

Field Supervisor-cum-trainer,
Natural Farming

(Jeremiya, 2019) My experience in integrated organic farming and local networking has helped my community in India, especially during environmental disasters. After the 2020 Assam Flood, I trained affected people in income generation through crop cultivation and livestock integration. I also educated farmers on the dangers of chemical farming and promoted organic techniques. At ARI, I hope to learn more about health, hygiene, clean food, and garbage sorting.

Malawai



Venitta Kaduya

Zodiak Broadcasting Station

Radio Presenter, Producer

(Veh, 2018) I use radio as a tool for education and empowerment, producing programs on agriculture, community development, and gender equality. I train women in organic farming and teach girls to make reusable sanitary pads. Being passionate about servant leadership, I strive to create lasting change through information and action. As a TA, I aim to mentor and uplift incoming participants.

Rural Leaders Training Program

ARI provides powerful leadership training for grassroots community leaders: the annual Rural Leaders Training Program.



Our Rural Leaders Training Center empowers some of the most marginalized communities on earth, so that they can enjoy and share the wealth of food, land, and community.

Servant Leadership

Community of Learning

Foodlife

The 9-month training is guided by our motto, 'That We May Live Together,' with the three pillars of learning: Servant Leadership, Foodlife, and Community of Learning.



Graduates around the world



1,445 graduates from 63 countries

Donate today!

>>> Invest in Rural Community Leadership!

The costs needed for Rural Leaders to participate in our training are mainly financed by donations. Tuition and board amount to US\$ 17,850, and the average airfare is around US\$ 2,500. Thanks to supporters like you, we provide financial assistance for these leaders to take part. With your help, we can invest in people who will foster lasting community change. For detailed information, please visit our website or call our office.

Visit ari.ac.jp/en/donate/ to find out how to contribute!

*ARI's domain name has been changed from ari-edu.org to ari.ac.jp

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